



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL
MATERIALS AGENCY

FACT SHEET

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Deseret Chemical Depot

Solid Waste Management Units

The U.S. Army is committed to environmental remediation



For more information,
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The depot's Solid Waste Management Units (SWMUs) were once used to dispose of conventional and chemical weapons and other industrial wastes such as paint and commercial cleaners. Surface cleanup of the most heavily contaminated areas, SWMUs 1 and 25, is expected to begin in 2012.

Scattered across Deseret Chemical Depot's nearly 20,000 acres are contaminated areas, referred to as Solid Waste Management Units (SWMUs). Between 1945 and 1978, these sites were used as acceptable disposal areas for conventional and chemical weapons, and other industrial materials such as paint, commercial cleaners and metal. Back then, burying or open-pit burning and open-pit detonation were acceptable methods of disposal. But as environmental awareness heightened, the U.S. Army discontinued the use of these disposal areas. Today, DCD's stockpile of chemical weapons is being destroyed at the Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (TOCDF), a state-of-the-art, environmentally safe incineration facility that is governed by federal, state and local laws.

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) requires military installations to assess and remediate their former disposal areas. Remediation for each SWMU is different, depending on the characteristics and risks associated with each area. Within the SWMUs, the level of cleanup is evaluated based on risk and future land use. In some instances only the contaminants

on the surface will be removed with buried materials being managed in place. Other areas will be cleaned by removing the contaminants that are both above and below ground. Once remediation is complete, acceptable institutional controls and long-term monitoring are put in place to safeguard against further risks developing.

Of the 29 identified SWMUs, DCD has sufficiently remediated 14 areas, meaning that they require no further action or that acceptable institutional controls are now in place. Cleanup is already underway or is being planned for DCD's 15 remaining SWMUs, which vary in size and level of contamination. DCD's most heavily contaminated areas, SWMUs 1 and 25 (*see Environmental Remediation fact sheet*), are former disposal sites that contain both conventional and chemical weapons, making their remediation one of the most complex challenges ever faced by the Department of Defense. Proper remediation of these areas will take careful planning, time, money and advanced technology. Yet, despite the challenges, the U.S. Army is committed to completing the job.

OVER ►



Solid Waste Management Units

The U.S. Army is committed to environmental remediation (continued)

“The U.S. Army is dedicated to being a good environmental steward,” says Troy Johnson, DCD Environmental Program Manager, “and it is committed to continuing remediation efforts at the Deseret Chemical Depot.”

Because many of the SWMUs pose ecological and human health risks such as explosion hazards, heavy metals, organic compounds and possible chemical agent exposure, access is restricted and the SWMUs are enclosed within a fenced and secure area.

Another safeguard includes investigative monitoring to determine the level of contamination. DCD has an aggressive groundwater monitoring program that has been conducted for more than 20 years and utilizes the depot’s 100-plus wells. Results indicate that the groundwater below two SWMUs is contaminated. The contaminants of concern are trichloroethylene, a colorless liquid that is used to clean metal parts; carbon tetrachloride, which is widely used in fire extinguishers and as a cleaning agent; and fuel hydrocarbons. Tests show that the contaminated groundwater has not migrated beyond the SWMUs’ boundaries.

Remediation efforts at DCD are projected to continue into 2017. To ensure uninterrupted remediation efforts at the end of stockpile elimination, DCD’s property will be split into two parts. Approximately 13,000 acres will be transferred to the Tooele Army Depot; the remaining 6,000 acres, which include the most heavily contaminated areas, will be managed by the Army’s Base Closure and Realignment Division (BRAC-D).



Cleanup of SWMUs 1 and 25 will include removing and properly disposing of all of the rusted metal debris that now litters the landscape. All corrective action and remediation work at DCD is conducted under the authority of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)

The Deseret Chemical Depot has already established and will continue to maintain those partnerships that foster successful remediation. DCD works closely with BRAC-D, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Army Environmental Command and the Utah Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste. Representatives from all of these agencies meet regularly and provide input at the DCD Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meetings, where remediation efforts at the depot are addressed. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings.

For more information about Deseret Chemical Depot’s remediation efforts, including the date of the next scheduled RAB meeting, contact the Tooele Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office.

